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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 2 April 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In follow-up to my letters to you regarding the plight of Palestinian prisoners and detainees under Israeli occupation, it is my profound regret to inform you of the death of another Palestinian man imprisoned by Israel, the occupying Power. Today, Maysara Abu Hamdiyeh, aged 64, died as a result of prolonged medical neglect by the occupying Power. He is the 207th Palestinian to die while in Israeli custody.

Despite being diagnosed with cancer several months ago, Abu Hamdiyeh was denied the necessary medical treatment for his condition and given only painkillers. Israel failed to provide him with proper medical care during his imprisonment, allowing the cancer to spread throughout his body. Israel also rejected prior appeals by the Palestinian leadership to release Abu Hamdiyeh to permit him to receive urgent medical treatment for the cancer. By the time that Abu Hamdiyeh was transferred to an Israeli hospital late in March, the disease had already overcome him and he was left there to die. Among his family, Maysara Abu Hamdiyeh leaves behind his four children, whom he had not seen since his most recent detention by Israel in 2002 and the decision by the occupying Power to ban his family visits.

The Palestinian people and their leadership hold Israel, the occupying Power, responsible for the death of Maysara Abu Hamdiyeh and they mourn his passing. Moreover, it must be reiterated that Israel is responsible for the safety, well-being and condition of all Palestinians being held in its captivity, including women and children and all ill prisoners, 25 of whom are reported to be suffering from cancer.

In this connection, we once again underscore the plight of another Palestinian prisoner, Samer Issawi, who remains on a prolonged hunger strike of more than 250 days in protest at his administrative detention by Israel without charge or trial. Issawi's health is in a grave condition and doctors have reported that his death is imminent. We call once again for his immediate release and for respect of his rights and the rights of all Palestinians in Israeli jails, both inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel itself.

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We have repeatedly drawn the international community's attention to the plight of the nearly 5,000 Palestinians who are being unlawfully imprisoned and detained by Israel in violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Palestinian prisoners and detainees are constantly being subjected to physical and psychological abuse and mistreatment by Israel, the occupying Power. This includes beatings, forced interrogations, humiliation, medical neglect and denial of access to education, to family visits and to due process of the law, as well as solitary confinement and other forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. As such, the Palestinian leadership has reiterated the call for international monitoring of the conditions of the Palestinians held in Israeli jails and detention centres and appeals to the international community to demand that Israel, the occupying Power, respect the human rights of all Palestinians in its captivity and respect its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, which governs situations of foreign occupation.

As we have repeatedly stated, the plight of Palestinian prisoners is among the highest priorities for the Palestinian leadership and remains a core, sensitive issue affecting nearly every Palestinian family. According to data amassed by the Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs, at least 800,000 Palestinians have been arrested by Israel since the occupation began in 1967. In fact, Israel continues to arrest and detain Palestinians on a near-daily basis, with recent reports indicating that, since the start of 2013, Israel has arrested at least 1,070 Palestinians. This includes the arrest of 234 children in the past three months, some as young as 8 years old.

The continuation of this aggression by the occupying Power is raising tensions and anger among the Palestinian people. Demonstrations have broken out throughout the State of Palestine, including in Al-Khalil, Bethlehem, East Jerusalem, Nablus and Ramallah, as a result of this latest tragedy, to which the Israeli occupying forces have responded with typical excessive force, including the firing of rubber bullets, tear gas canisters and sound bombs, and the arrest of several protesters. Abu Hamdiyeh's death has also raised tensions among Palestinian prisoners and detainees, who have protested in at least two prisons, including the "Eshel" prison where Abu Hamdiyeh had been held, and who have declared a three-day hunger strike in protest at his death.

We reiterate our calls for international action, including by all relevant organs of the United Nations, to address this gross violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, who continue to suffer under Israel's nearly 46-year military occupation. The international community's continued failure to hold Israel accountable for its violations and crimes is only fostering further impunity, inflicting more hardship and injustice on the Palestinian people and further delaying the long-overdue realization of their inalienable human rights, freedom and dignity and further delaying peace.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 458 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 14 March 2013 (A/ES-10/585-S/2013/160) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations

being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations